

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 035201

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: BREAKFAST MEETING WITH UK
TORY LEADER, MARGARET THATCHER, FEBRUARY 18

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM LOWENSTEIN, ACTING
BONN AND LONDON: FOR SONNENFELDT AND HARTMAN AND S/S
GENEVA FOR S/S

1. SETTING:

THIS WILL BE YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH MARGARET THATCHER IN
HER NEW CAPACITY AS HEAD OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND LEADER
OF THE OPPOSITION. THE MEETING OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR
YOU TO GET TO KNOW HER PERSONALLY AND TO BRIEF HER ON YOUR
INITIATIVES FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT ALSO CONFORMS
WITH YOUR PRACTICE OF MEETING WITH THE UK LEADER OF THE OP-
POSITION WHENEVER POSSIBLE ON YOUR UK STOPOVERS.

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THATCHER TOOK OVER THE REINS OF THE PARTY FOLLOWING THE SECOND ROUND OF TORY BALLOTING ON FEBRUARY 11, SOUNDLY DEFEATING HER FOUR OPPONENTS WITH AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF 146 OF THE 276 TORY VOTES. (WILLIAM WHITELAW RAN A POOR--AND UNEXPECTED--SECOND WITH 79.) SHE IS NOW IN THE PROCESS

OF PUTTING TOGETHER A SHADOW CABINET (HEATH HAS DECLINED TO SERVE IN IT, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT), AND ATTEMPTING TO RALLY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY WHICH HAS DRIFTED AIMLESSLY SINCE ITS DEFEAT BY THE LABORITES LAST OCTOBER.

MRS. THATCHER IS ALMOST TOTALLY INEXPERIENCED IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BUT IS BRIGHT AND QUICK TO LEARN. SHE IS NOT EXPECTED TO HAVE ANY SPECIFIC TOPIC WHICH SHE WISHES TO COVER BUT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY APPRECIATE WHATEVER BRIEFING YOU MIGHT WISH TO GIVE HER ON US INITIATIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ELSEWHERE, ON THE US ECONOMIC OUTLOOK (SHE IS A TAX LAWYER AND COMPETENT ECONOMIST), AND ON WORLD ENERGY ISSUES.

2. CHECKLIST:

--CONSERVATIVE PARTY. CONGRATULATE MRS. THATCHER ON HER ELECTION AS PARTY HEAD. ELICIT HER VIEWS ON FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE PARTY.

--MIDDLE EAST. BRIEF HER ON YOUR RECENT TRIP AND PROSPECTS FOR NEXT STEPS TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT.

--INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY. GIVE HER YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE US ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND OUTLINE INITIATIVES WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE WORLD ENERGY PROBLEM.

3. BIOGRAPHIC DATA: THATCHER, MARGARET ROBERTS.

LEADER, CONSERVATIVE PARTY.

ADDRESSED AS: MRS. THATCHER.

--- MARGARET THATCHER, 49, WAS ELECTED LEADER OF
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THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY ON FEBRUARY 11, 1975. SHE IS THE FIRST WOMAN TO HEAD A MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY IN BRITAIN AND COULD BECOME THE FIRST WOMAN PRIME MINISTER WHEN THE PARTY RETURNS TO POWER. SINCE HER ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT IN 1959, MRS. THATCHER HAS GAINED CONSIDERABLE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE IN BOTH THE CABINET (SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION) AND THE SHADOW CABINET (MOST RECENTLY AS DEPUTY CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER). IN THE LATTER POST, SHE

ADVOCATED A TIGHT-MONEY POLICY AND CURBS ON GOVERNMENT SPENDING TO HELP REMEDY BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

BECOMING LEADER OF A PARTY THAT HAS ITS FAIR SHARE OF MALE CHAUVINISTS WAS A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT FOR MRS. THATCHER, WHO HAS DISPLAYED COURAGE, DEFTNESS AND DETERMINATION. SHE HAS STAMINA, IS A PRODIGIOUS, HIGHLY ORGANIZED WORKER,

AND RELIES STRONGLY ON DETAIL RATHER THAN PRINCIPLE. A BRITISH WRITER DESCRIBES HER POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AS SIMPLE AND TRADITIONAL: VALUING ABILITY, HARDWORK AND ENTERPRISE AND SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY, THRIFT AND APPLICATION.

AFTER GRADUATING FROM OXFORD WITH HONORS IN CHEMISTRY, MRS. THATCHER STUDIED LAW, SPECIALIZING IN TAX LEGISLATION. SHE AND HER HUSBAND, DENIS, HAVE TWENTY-ONE YEAR OLD TWINS, MARK AND CAROL. MRS. THATCHER ENJOYS OPERA, THEATER AND READING.

4. FOR S/S: A BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR DINNER WITH WILSON AND CALLAGHAN SENT SEPTEL. ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND MATERIAL, INCLUDING A PAPER ON CURRENT US ECONOMIC PROSPECTS, BEING HAND-CARRIED BY HARTMAN TO BONN. EMBASSY LONDON'S BIOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT OF THATCHER AND ANY COMMENT RE ISSUES TO BE COVERED IN THATCHER MEETING WILL BE SENT SEPTEL TO BONN AND GENEVA. INGERSOLL

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